

Minidoka Issei Memorial



Covered Area

View toward the covered area and amphitheater seating (#3 on plan drawing). The amphitheater is located in a natural, bowled, low point on the site with views of the canal and distant mountains. The original barbed-wire fence that ran along the canal would also be reconstructed to restrict access to the water and to juxtapose the experience of looking out toward the future with a reminder of the past (#4 on plan drawing).

Concept

The intent of this design is to honor and memorialize the journey of the Issei and to reflect the resilience of character and strength with which they faced this journey.

As one strolls through the site, they will both begin and end their experience with two sculptural symbols of hope. The first sculpture (#1 on the plan drawing) represents the hopes and dreams that the Issei held for themselves and their new lives upon immigration to the United States of America, while the second sculpture represents the hope for a better future for the children of the Issei, which the Issei maintained through trials that tainted their own dreams (#2). Continuing down the stone pathway the story of the Issei is gradually revealed to the visitor through poetry, quotations, and images etched into large rocks along the pathway or the pathway itself. In this way, as one moves through the site they will first encounter a portion of pathway symbolic of the immigration years, followed by sections symbolizing the outbreak of WWII, the interment years at Minidoka, and finally the post-war/reflection period. The transition between each major period is marked by a tori gate. The pathway terminates with three separate areas for one to reflect on the past and be inspired for the future in different ways. These spaces include amphitheater seating for meditation or periodic ceremonies/gatherings (#3), a shaded area for resting or ritual purposes (leaving paper cranes or other objects at the statue) (#2), and an area for remembrance of specific individuals at the memorial wall (#4). After experiencing these spaces one will follow the same pathway out of the site that they entered on, however the experience will still hold surprises for the visitor with symbolic engravings in the ground and rocks that are directed toward someone who is exiting the memorial.

